

HORSESHOE RANCH

Region VI



Property Location, Size and Ownership Status:

Horseshoe Ranch (HSR) is an in-holding within the BLM-managed Agua Fria National Monument located along Bloody Basin Road, about nine miles southeast of Cordes Junction in Yavapai County. HSR includes 199 acres of deeded property along with grazing allotments permitted through BLM (32,388 acres) and USFS (35,899 acres on the Tonto National Forest).

Property Description:

HSR is located at ~3,265 feet elevation, with vegetation primarily Sonoran desertscrub with small areas of riparian deciduous woodlands and riparian scrubland. There are ~25 acres of fallowed agricultural land within the deeded property.

There are multiple water rights and pending water right applications associated with the deeded property and the two allotments. Within the deeded property these include application for a certificate of water right for Silver Creek Spring; three well registrations; three claims for water use directly out of Long Gulch, Indian Creek, and the Agua Fria; and three statements of claimant (SOCs) for Silver Creek and two deeded wells. Water rights on the allotments include eight certificates of water rights and SOC for stock tanks; one SOC for a stock pond; five well registrations; five claims for wells and streamside watering; and eight additional SOC for stock tanks, wells and streamside watering. For additional detail on the water rights refer to: *Horseshoe Ranch Property – Water Rights Summary, June 30, 2012*.

Wildlife that uses HSR and associated allotments include antelope, mule and whitetail deer, bear, mountain lion, bobcat, coyote, black-tailed jackrabbit, javelina, Gambel's quail, Gila monster, and multiple other reptile, bird, and small mammal species. The Agua Fria River, including the portion of HSR, has been designated by the National Audubon Society as an important bird area (IBA).

There are 13 buildings on the HSR deeded property, the majority built in the 1950 and 1960s. Four buildings are residences (864-3600 ft²), all significantly remodeled from their original construction. There is a swimming pool located south of the main house. Other buildings include a tin house/shed, playhouse, generator room, battery room, workshop, two storage buildings,

horse stalls, and a 2,820 ft² barn with attached tack room. Additional structures within the deeded property include a stock pond, corrals with associated drinkers, a double loading chute, livestock scales, an unimproved runway, and several fuel tanks.

The HSR deeded property contains multiple historic sites, including rock art, several of which are eligible for registration under the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and Arizona Register of Historic Places (ARHP). For more information regarding the historic sites see *A Cultural Resources Survey of Approximately 199 Acres for the Horseshoe Ranch near Cordes Lakes, Yavapai County, Arizona, ASM Accession Number: 2011-0244*.

The property is staffed by a full-time Wildlife Area Manager who resides on-site, and a full-time temporary assistant who resides off-site.

Property Purchase/Funding Source(s):

HSR was purchased by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission in March of 2011 for ~3.2 million dollars. The primary funding sources were Department Heritage and USFWS Section 6 funds to complete the purchase, with a variety of other smaller donors and Special Tag funds used to purchase the ~\$800K appraised value of the two allotments..

Property Purpose/Management Focus

A draft property operational plan for the HSR property was developed in April 2012. Key management goals/objectives for the HSR property are:

- 1) To preserve the historic ranch while conserving, managing and utilizing its natural resources. This includes protection of cultural resources and for the ranch to continue to serve as base property for the Copper Creek and Horseshoe grazing allotments.
- 2) To have species and habitat management on HSR meet the requirements and objectives of the Heritage Fund and Section 6 funding sources; and to appropriately manage Heritage sensitive specie, such as antelope and grassland habitat, other game species and wildlife populations, native fish and their habitats.
- 3) To develop and provide wildlife and outdoor recreational instruction and outreach activities, and to develop HSR as a “destination outreach facility” for agency and non-governmental organizations to use for meetings, events, banquets, retreats etc.

Operations/Budget:

The HSR base budget totals ~\$209,117 for FY2013, and includes PS/ERE for a full time manager and assistant, and operation and maintenance costs.

Potential Risks:

Because Horseshoe Ranch is a property where AGFD promotes and hosts Department and public events, human safety is a concern. Potential risks include fire in buildings or adjacent areas, flooding of the Agua Fria impacting the crossing to the ranch headquarters, wildlife or livestock encounters, weather, and untreated water in the HSR taps. HSR is one of the Department’s premier properties, and many internal and external events are held on the property. Maintaining and enhancing the property to ensure that this showcase property meets the needs of internal and external entities will continue to require substantial funds. As noted above HSR includes a number of structures and infrastructure associated with the site serving as a residence, working cattle ranch, and Department and public destination. Maintenance of these facilities is required to ensure that the Department’s investment is protected.